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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (INFO ADDRESSEE & PARA #S)

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DEPARTMENT FOR IO/UNP, EUR/SCE, NEA/IAP, AND AF/W

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2018
TAGS: OIC KISL PGOV PREL AORC KV SR SG
SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY MEETS WITH OIC CHAIR, PRESIDENT WADE
OF SENEGAL

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JAY T. SMITH for reasons 1.5 B/D

¶1. (C) Summary: On April 22 Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Sada Cumber, accompanied by Charge and political counselor, met with Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade in his new capacity as the chairman of the 57-nation OIC following Senegal's hosting of the OIC summit in March. Special Envoy Cumber shared with Wade his plan for supporting the OIC's initiatives and the MOU he hopes to sign with the OIC Secretary General. Wade complimented the Special Envoy on

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his proposals but emphasized the need for tangible accomplishments. He urged the United States to call for an Islamic-Christian dialogue and to support his efforts at brokering a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. Wade also agreed to encourage Saudi Arabia and African OIC member states to recognize Kosovo. End summary.

U.S. Support for OIC Initiatives

¶2. (SBU) Special Envoy Cumber congratulated President Wade on the success of the summit and the successful conclusion of the peace negotiations between Chad and the Sudan that President Wade and the president of Gabon mediated. He told President Wade that he hoped to work closely with him and OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu explaining that the

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his role as OIC Special Envoy was not only to act as the U.S. representative to the OIC, its members, and Muslim communities in non-OIC countries, but also to oversee U.S. support for the OIC's initiatives. Special Envoy Cumber shared with Wade the draft MOU that he hoped to sign with SG Ihsanoglu and outlined the three areas on which the United States would focus -- science and technology, enhancing the status of women and education) emphasizing that these themes were drawn from the OIC's ten-year program. Moreover, he informed Wade of his plan to establish a digital library in the ten poorest OIC member countries. Special Envoy Cumber asked for and received Wade's support for these proposals, although Wade commented that the program should focus less on conferences and seminars and more on &concrete things.⁸ He opined that most development aid, including U.S. assistance, to Senegal had resulted in &zero8 and argued that developing countries and donors needed to think of new ways to spend aid money to produce more tangible

results.

¶3. (SBU) To illustrate his point, President Wade described four projects that his government was initiating which he said would have tangible results: the eco-village; & hut for little ones;⁸ the University of the Future; and the cyber-village. The eco-village, which is designed to be self-sustaining and environmentally sound, is divided into sections including one which provides solar and wind-generated electricity as well as sections with fruit trees and trees for lumber. The already established &huts for little ones⁸ (i.e. cases de tout petits) are in essence day-cares where children under six can get an education through the use of educational games and traditional storytelling. The University of the Future would bring together students that already have masters degrees and train them in practical disciplines such as agriculture and information and communications technology. The University would leverage digital conferencing so that students would not have to leave Africa to go to developed countries to receive this education. The cyber-village project would provide a large flat-panel screen to villages for use in receiving information and providing training.

Islamic-Christian Dialogue

¶4. (C) In addition, Special Envoy Cumber informed President Wade of his plan to organize a summit at the White House with heads of the 10-15 largest Muslim development NGOs and expressed support for Wade,s proposal to organize a dialogue between the West and the Muslim world. Wade expressed appreciation for the support and emphasized that the dialogue should be an Islamic-Christian dialogue not a Islamo-Judeo-Christian dialogue as proposed by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. Wade asked the Special Envoy to urge President Bush to call for a summit of Christian and Muslim leaders and strongly encourage him to say no to King Abdullah,s proposals for a dialogue for the three &revealed⁸ religions.

¶5. (C) Special Envoy Cumber asked about the possibility of

Wade, in his capacity as chair of the OIC and unofficial head of the ummah, to bring together the various schools of thought and traditions of Islam using the cooperative model of American Muslims as an example. Wade replied that it would be hard to do so because of deep philosophical differences. Moreover, he said there are some Muslims that think the West is the devil. As a result, he opined that progress in resolving East-West divisions depends on President Bush,s actions in the Muslim world.

¶6. (C) According to Wade three things must be done to improve U.S. relations with the Muslim world: 1) Peace must be obtained between Israel and the Palestinians; 2) The United States must withdraw from Iraq; and 3) a peaceful settlement must be obtained with Iran. Wade commented that he had offered his services to mediate between Iran and the United States and that while Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had accepted, President Bush had not. He opined that if the United States attacks Iran three-fifths of the world,s Muslims would support Iran.

Promoting Peace Between Israel and the Palestinians

¶7. (C) President Wade informed the Special Envoy that he had been in communication with President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, President Shimon Perez, and Hamas leader Khaled Maashal in an effort to broker a cease-fire. According to Wade, Hamas is ready to agree to a cease-fire if Wade is the one to &launch⁸ it and if Israel is willing to lift the embargo on the Gaza Strip and end the check-points in the West Bank. President Wade said he,s on a mission to make peace and said he wanted to know if President Bush was willing to help.

Recognition of Kosovo

¶8. (C) Special Envoy Cumber urged President Wade to use his influence to persuade OIC members to recognize Kosovo. Wade responded that he had already discussed the matter with King Abdullah but agreed to contact him again. He also undertook to contact African OIC members to encourage them to recognize Kosovo.

Comment

¶9. (C) While President Wade seemed to have difficulties in separating his roles as chair of the OIC and President of Senegal he expressed support for the work of the Special Envoy. Although he acknowledges the importance of education, Wade believes that Senegal does not need any assistance in this area. He commented to us that Senegal devotes 40 percent of its budget to education. He is most enthusiastic about assistance projects that deal with construction of some kind and opined during the meeting that developing countries such as Senegal can implement small projects and that donor countries and international NGOs should focus on large infrastructure projects. It is not clear what level of active support we can expect from President Wade for the program described in the MOU. Moreover, he seems almost hostile to the idea of an inter-faith dialogue that is not limited to Islam and Christianity, which might complicate efforts to get the support of Saudi Arabia. During the meeting President Wade also claimed that &everyone8 wants him to act as a mediator. He clearly revels in the idea of being an international statesman and actively pursues opportunities to take the global stage. He took a call from Hamas just as we were leaving.

¶10. (U) This cable was cleared by Special Envoy Sada Cumber.

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